

Widely-Held Expectations in Social and Emotional Development

Birth–3 years	3–5 years	5–7 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May demonstrate visible expressions of emotion (temper tantrums) ▪ Actively show affection for familiar people ▪ May show anxiety when separated from familiar people and places ▪ Are naturally very curious about other children and may watch and imitate others ▪ Generally play alone; may or may not attempt to interact with others ▪ Strive toward independence with support and affection (sitting up, crawling, walking, dressing, feeding, toileting) ▪ Begin to see themselves as people and appear self-centered ▪ Begin to see themselves as strong through directing others: “sit down” ▪ May become possessive of belongings (special people, toys, special times) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May display their emotions easily and appear very sensitive and impulsive (crying fits, “No!”) ▪ Begin to feel more comfortable when separated from familiar people, places, and things (visiting a neighbor, nursery school, baby-sitter) ▪ May play alone or beside others but are becoming more aware of the feelings of others. May be frustrated at attempts to socialize but hold no grudges. ▪ Begin to assert independence by saying “No” or “I can do it myself!” May dump a cupful of water onto the floor while looking directly at you ▪ See selves as family members and as boy or girl in the family ▪ See themselves as powerful and creative doers. (If the child can’t reach something, he or she will get a stool) ▪ May continue to appear possessive ▪ May feel if something is shared for a brief period, it is gone forever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May continue to show intense emotions (one moment will say, “I love you” and the next “You are mean.”) ▪ May appear anxious once again when separated from familiar people and places (beginning school, sleep-overs) ▪ Are learning to cooperate with others for longer periods of time; friendships may change frequently ▪ Continue to develop feelings of independence by becoming able to do certain things (making a simple breakfast or riding a bicycle) ▪ May begin to talk about self and to define self in terms of what they have or own ▪ May feel they are being treated unfairly if other get something they do not ▪ Begin to see themselves as bad, good, clever, and may seem very hard on themselves ▪ Begin to develop the ability to share possessions and take turns

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7–9 years	9–11 years	11–13 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May continue to show bursts of emotion and impatience less frequently May show emotions that are both judgmental and critical of themselves and others Continue to feel some anxiety within the larger community when separated from familiar people, places, things (going to camp, sleep-overs, shopping malls) Are becoming more outgoing Are developing closer friendships with others; may begin to play mainly with children of the same sex Show a generally increased sense of self-confidence Will eagerly take on tasks and activities likely to be successful but usually will not take risks May define self as a particular name, age, size, hair color, or other characteristic (“I’m Elizabeth Anne, and I’m seven years old!”) Are sensitive to criticism and display feelings of success or failure depending on how adults respond to them Continue to develop the ability to share possessions and to take turns if they understand something is not always “lost” by doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May appear relatively calm and at peace with themselves and occasionally become angry, sad, or depressed, but these moments are usually short-lived Often hide feelings of anxiety when introduced to new experiences by appearing overconfident Continue to be very sociable and spend time with parents, friends or the same sex, and often have a “special” friend Are generally positive about themselves and begin to understand what they are good at doing; may comment easily, “I can do that” or “I can’t do that” Often define self by physical characteristics and possessions as well as likes and dislikes Often vary between the sexes in their view of what is important in dress and physical appearance Are sensitive to criticism and display feelings of success or failure, depending on how adults and peers respond to them Continue to develop the ability to work and play with others May not want to be disturbed when involved in an activity or game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May begin to show intense emotions, bouts of anxiety, moodiness. Emotions may come close to the surface (cry and anger easily) Continue to hide feelings of anxiety with friends and family, often appearing overconfident with a know-it-all attitude Generally get along well with their friends and continue to show an interest in having a “best” friend; fights and arguments may occur from time to time Start to question adult authority Sometimes engage in self put-downs; in conversations with others may say, “I can’t do anything right!” May begin to define self in terms of opinions, beliefs, values, and expand sense of self by attempting to copy the culture of current fads (clothes, music, sports) Gradually gaining independence from parental influence Are sensitive to criticism and display feelings of success or failure May become self-critical May appear to become possessive with own belongings, especially with younger brothers and sisters May view younger siblings as nuisances when involved with peers and feel discriminated against in family situations